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**Citation for published version:**

Nenadic, S & Tuckett, S 2016, 'Artisans and aristocrats in nineteenth-century Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, vol. 95, no. 2, pp. 203-229. <https://doi.org/10.3366/shr.2016.0296>

**Digital Object Identifier (DOI):**

[10.3366/shr.2016.0296](https://doi.org/10.3366/shr.2016.0296)

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Peer reviewed version

**Published In:**

The Scottish Historical Review

**Publisher Rights Statement:**

This article has been accepted for publication by Edinburgh University Press in the Scottish Historical Review, Volume 95 Issue 2, pp 203-229, <http://www.euppublishing.com/doi/full/10.3366/shr.2016.0296>.

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Artisans and Aristocrats in Nineteenth-Century Scotland

ABSTRACT

This article considers relationships between artisans and aristocrats on estates and elsewhere in Scotland during the long nineteenth century. It argues that the Scottish aristocracy, and women in particular, were distinctly preoccupied with the craft economy through schemes to promote employment but also due to attachments to ‘romanticised’ local and Celtic identities. Building in part on government initiatives and aristocratic office-holding as public officials and presidents of learned societies, but also sustained through personal interest and emotional investments, the craft economy and individual entrepreneurs were supported and encouraged. Patronage of and participation in public exhibitions of craftwork forms one strand of discussion and the role of hand-made objects in public gift-giving forms another. Tourism, which estates encouraged, sustained many areas of craft production with south-west Scotland and the highland counties providing examples. Widows who ran estates were involved in the development of artisan skills among local women, a convention that was further developed at the end of the century by the Home Industries movement, but also supported male artisans. Aristocrats, men and women, commonly engaged in craft practice as a form of escapist leisure that connected them to the land, to a sense of the past and to a small group of easily identified and sympathetic workers living on their estates. Artisans and workshop owners, particularly in rural areas, engage creatively in a patronage regime where elites held the upper hand and the impact on the craft economy of aristocratic support in its various forms was meaningful.

The nineteenth-century aristocracy has been studied from varying perspectives reflecting shifts in mainstream scholarly interests. Agricultural improvement and industrial investment on estates have been major concerns along with political control and patronage.<sup>1</sup> The fall of the aristocracy, charted through the collapse of wealth due to inheritance taxes and agricultural depression and the rise of new financial or industrial elites, has also attracted scholarly attention.<sup>2</sup> Aristocratic women, be they political wives, estate managers or fashion leaders have been popular topics of the past twenty years as have country houses as buildings and the focus for estate life.<sup>3</sup> Accounts of connections between aristocrats and estate workers have focused on farm labourers and poor villagers and particularly, in Scotland, on philanthropic efforts in times of crisis.<sup>4</sup> Less well documented, other than with reference to the agents and factors that ran estates,<sup>5</sup> are relationships with skilled workers such as the artisans who form the subject of this article. Aristocratic patronage of craft-based firms in London or the county towns are well understood through studies of the decorative arts and business records<sup>6</sup> or through instances when members of the royal family provided displays of craft-made goods in the hope of generating fashionable emulation, as in 1842 when the silver-weaving trade in London successfully petitioned Queen Victoria to give costume parties at court to boost sales.<sup>7</sup> But artisans who worked on estates or for noble patrons outside elite court circles are largely unknown. As this article argues, the Scottish aristocracy were distinctly preoccupied with the craft economy in the regions that they dominated, on their estates and beyond, as too, it appears, were elements of the Irish aristocracy. Moreover, they and the Irish were distinct for similar reasons connected with conspicuous engagement in public service and a deeper commitment to the localities from which they drew their titles and wealth than appears to have been the case in England or Wales.<sup>8</sup> This commitment, which was especially strong among women, was a product of the relative distance from the metropolitan centre, leading to full-time residence on estates for many. Additionally, attachment to ‘romanticised’ local, particularly Celtic, identities and awareness of the plight of the rural poor, generated personal and collective enthusiasms to preserve an increasingly valued ‘peasant’ culture focussed on skilled work.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, Scottish country estates and their owners, mindful from 1707 of the need for commercialisation as a national project, had long supported the local skilled workforce through housing and employment and through the strategic encouragement of new crafts in the face of economic change. Direct intervention was unnecessary on most estates in England, yet in Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century, ‘patriotic gentlemen’<sup>10</sup> and elite-dominated quasi-government bodies like the Forfeited Estates Commission or the Board of Trustees for Manufactures and Fisheries, sought to stimulate modern commercial relationships in under-developed places through giving financial incentives to craft workers to settle, ply their trades, teach and set examples for locals.<sup>11</sup> Planned villages, country house building and craft patronage in smaller towns further supported artisanal employment.<sup>12</sup> At Peterhead in Aberdeenshire it was observed in the 1790s:

The town is excellently supplied with tradesmen of all kinds, particularly wrights and masons, many of whom are not only fit to perform the operative part of their business, but qualified to give and execute plans of houses, and are employed for that purpose, not only in the town, but in many places in the country at a considerable distance. All kinds of household-furniture are made in the neatest and most substantial manner. There is one turner, who employs two or three hands besides himself; he is a very ingenious young man, and turns a variety of articles so neatly, that his shop is resorted to by most strangers who frequent this town, and his goods are commissioned from many places at a distance.<sup>13</sup>

By the early nineteenth century, government initiatives to stimulate rural craft waned as industrial and urban development became self-sustaining. Board of Trustees’ market interventions via bounties, prizes or special support continued into the 1820s, when the body re-focussed on design education, but was increasingly viewed as unnecessary.<sup>14</sup> Agricultural specialisation, industrial displacement and the urban drift of skilled populations suggest a limited relationship between artisans and aristocrats prior to the late nineteenth century, when Ruskin-inspired bodies under female patronage, such as those

connected with the rural home industries movement, came into existence throughout Britain and particularly in Scotland.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, on some northern estates such as Sutherland attempts to diversify employment and teach new skills were met with wholesale resistance by an embattled peasantry anxious to retain older ways of life.<sup>16</sup> Yet, as this article shows, the picture was complex and while some estate owners had limited interest in cultivating craft workers, others were fully engaged over lengthy periods, particularly in areas with a proliferation of smaller towns, as in Ayrshire and the southwest of Scotland or Fife, where many smaller craft firms were focussed and craft cultures flourished. Some of the great estates retained an unwavering support for Scottish artisans with individual aristocrats exhibiting strong emotional attachments to such workers and their skills. A parallel involvement in public service through office holding, government appointments or committee membership gave further opportunities for craft patronage. The latter is explored in the first half of this article, with estates-based activity the focus in the second half.

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In charting relationships between aristocrats and artisans, office holding and estate management were, of course, closely connected. The Buccleuch estates in southern Scotland employed numerous local craftsmen in house development works and also supported communities of craftsmen producing for the market.<sup>17</sup> In the 1840s, when structural shifts in the economy started to impact on rural textile employment, estate factors sent the duke of Buccleuch regular reports on the artisans in Hawick, where they were predominantly weavers, and in Sanquhar, close to the great Buccleuch house of Drumlanrig on their Queensberry estate, where there was a carpet weaving workshop and a home knitting industry.<sup>18</sup> The lack of work for the Sanquhar carpet weavers was a cause for concern in the 1850s also, when production finally ceased.<sup>19</sup> But the knitters fared better, for in the second half of the century the Buccleuch family, with connections into royal patronage and intent on developing their sporting interests, gave active support to the re-development of the 'traditional' Sanquhar knitting industry,

making gloves from a wool and cotton mix, which were much favoured by the ‘horse and hound’ set. Sanquhar knits adapted patterns from tweed cloth and gave these names, such as the ‘Duke’ pattern, to secure elite associations. A ‘Prince of Wales’ pattern was launched in 1871 to mark the visit of the future Edward VII to nearby Dumlanrig. Another popular pattern was named the ‘Cornet’ in honour of one of the principal players in the Sanquhar Common Riding, an invented tradition of the later nineteenth century, which has long functioned here and in other Scottish borders towns as a tourist attraction under noble patronage.<sup>20</sup>

Buccleuch support for the local craft economy was extended in 1887 with the opening of the Buccleuch Memorial Hall in Hawick, launched with a Handicraft and Industrial Exhibition that ran for several months and was designed to showcase and inspire local production. The opening event and speeches were widely reported in the Scottish press.<sup>21</sup> The exhibition, which included elaborate displays of antiquities on loan from the Buccleuch family and other local elites, along with objects loaned by the British Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum in London, offered four competitive classes open to craftsmen from the Borders area, with cash prizes presented by the Duchess. Class 1 was for cabinetmakers and joiners, and the exhibits included inlaid tables, ‘elegant’ doors, mantles and over-mantles, dressing tables and workboxes, desks and clock cases. Class 2, consistent with the rural character of the region, was for millwrights and agricultural instrument makers, whilst Class 3, for engineers and smiths, also included decorative iron work. The final Class, 4, was for draftsmen and decorators producing ornamental panels, architectural drawings and etchings on glass, the latter mostly showing local scenes of tourist interest.<sup>22</sup>

Buccleuch was approached to make loans for an Edinburgh craft exhibition the year after the one in Hawick. Held in the Royal Scottish Academy during the winter of 1888-9, this was a much bigger affair, involving a series of printed pre-exhibition prospectuses to drum up patronage support and advertise the classes and prizes. The aim of the event, whose organizing committee included a number

of notable Edinburgh craft-based business owners, such as Hugh Reid of Whytock, Reid & Co., furniture makers, was to give:

an opportunity for those skilled in any of the forms of handiwork comprised within the scheme, both professional workers and amateurs, to exhibit specimens of their craft, and prizes will be offered for excellence of design and workmanship.<sup>23</sup>

The parallel aim was to exhibit a loan collection of historical items, with the intention that special prominence be given to examples of Scottish work. The extensive list of loans offered by the duke, which involved complex negotiation and concern over security and insurance, came from nearby Dalkeith House, and included furniture and objects linked to Mary Queen of Scots, along with pictures and rare books.<sup>24</sup>

As the exhibition plans progressed, several Edinburgh-based craft-business owners joined the organizing and judging committees and also offered prizes. They included cabinet makers John Macrae of John Taylor & Son; the interior designer William Scott Morton; various goldsmiths, such as Marshall & Sons; decorators, including Thomas Bonnar; carvers and gilders like Aitken, Dott & Sons, glass stainers and brass founders. The final list of patrons, headed by Buccleuch, included the marquis of Lothian, earls of Haddington, Stair, Roseberry and Hopeton, plus several gentry landowners. There were five classes for professional craft workers, with each class also including prizes for apprentices; and three classes for amateurs. Unlike the Hawick exhibition, some of the exhibitors were women. The cost of entry was 1s. for professionals and 2s. 6d. for amateurs, with entries available for sale at the end. Class 1 was for woodcarving, with a top prize of £3 for a wooden panel in the style of Louis XVI. Other classes included carving in stone or marble; modelling and carving in clay; *repousse* metal work; wood inlay; turnery; picture frames; painted decoration and book ornament. Class IV was for gold and silver work and included an apprentice prize of £1 for a bracelet of Celtic design and another of £3.3s,

which was offered by the Goldsmiths Incorporation of Edinburgh, for a brooch and bracelet to match in Celtic design.<sup>25</sup>

Aristocratic patronage was important for all forms of public exhibition in the nineteenth century, though the extent of support could vary from the 'ornamental' to the active. Aristocrats lent their names for the advertising a 'supporters list' when an event was being planned and they also offered paintings and objects for display. Attendance at an exhibition opening was particularly important for attracting the public. Exhibitions of modern craftwork, which were frequently run as competitions, were normally paralleled with exhibitions of historic craftworks on loan from noble collections. The purpose of the latter was two-fold. They provided models of style and design to be emulated in historicised goods of contemporary manufacture. They also provided examples of the highest quality of execution and workmanship. For the viewing public, the loan collections were a celebration of Scottish pride in manufacture for and ownership by great families and they were invariably showy and attractive. The international exhibitions used similar devices to showcase the new alongside the ancient, including the showcasing of modern colonial craft wares alongside fine antique objects of exotic manufacture on loan from great collections.<sup>26</sup> The meaning of such exhibitions for the aristocrats involved are less easily uncovered, though they were clearly connected to concerns for local employment and to a general commitment to public service in the interest of national prosperity, which in the case of Buccleuch can probably be traced to the long and influential career of the third Duke (1746–1812) and his early tutelage under Adam Smith.<sup>27</sup>

Certainly, compared with England where there was criticism of aristocratic posturing over craft encouragement with no tangible real input, the Scottish aristocracy were active public servants who served on and engaged enthusiastically with a range of official bodies promoting craft.<sup>28</sup> This was evidenced in the 1840s in correspondence between the nobles-led Board of Trustees for Manufacturers and Fisheries and Sir Grant Suttie of Prestongrange, regarding supplies of his high quality estate clay for manufacture in Prestonpans into fine hand crafted and engraved ceramics in the style of Neapolitan



wares, an industry that the Board sought to develop.<sup>29</sup> Sir John Stuart Forbes of Pitsligo, a noted agricultural reformer and leading figure in the Highland and Agricultural Society, also corresponded with the Board on the same subject, sending reports from Porta Ferma in Rome on how the technique was practised.<sup>30</sup> Scottish aristocrats and nobles travelling abroad in the early and mid nineteenth century seem commonly to have looked for products that might be developed in Scotland, sending samples to the Board of Trustees with suggestions. One of these was Lady Hope of Pinkie House, Musselburgh, who in 1844 had sent the Board a sample of worsted velvet plush and another of a ‘sort of tapestry’ article. Though both were returned with a polite negative as unsuitable for Scottish manufacture, the patriotic interest exhibited by Lady Hope was typical of her class.<sup>31</sup>

Traditions of aristocratic public service, a product, perhaps, of relatively poor estates when compared with those in England, was often conducted abroad in the colonies, particularly in Canada and India, where several noble Scottish families—including Elgin, Minto and Dalhousie—supplied successive generations of governors and viceroys. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the connection with India generated a close link to the popularisation of Indian craft wares in Scotland through international exhibitions and charitable bazaars, the latter frequently associated with aristocratic female patronage. One such event was the Scottish Children’s League of Pity Bazaar in Edinburgh in 1903, where the Berwickshire stall, presided over by Lady Miller of Manderston, sister of the then Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, comprised mainly Indian decorative goods that she had selected when attending the Delhi Durbar earlier that year.<sup>32</sup>

Nineteenth-century debates around the moral value of traditional craft workers in India had much in common with the same preoccupations with craft production in rural Britain.<sup>33</sup> Both Indian and British craftsmen found their greatest public expression through display in international exhibitions, with prominent nobles offering patronage to such events and also playing a role in the purchase and popularising of goods on display. One of these was Archibald Montgomerie, 13<sup>th</sup> earl of Eglinton in his role as Viceroy of Ireland in the 1850s, a decade that marked the start of ‘exhibition fever’. Eglinton

opened and attended the first Irish International Exhibition held in Cork in 1852, which had the usual types of modern and traditional exhibits and where there were impressive displays of Celtic carved bog oak furniture and other objects, such as a ‘sumptuous wine-cooler’ with an interior of metal with ‘fine chasings.’<sup>34</sup> During the run of the exhibition, the earl purchased items of bog oak furniture, along with other Irish craft wares, as did his wife, who favoured textiles, lace and embroidery. ‘A chair beautifully carved, and made of black bog oak, and several other specimens of Irish manufacture’ were loaned by Eglinton for display at the Dublin Exhibition in 1853.<sup>35</sup> The countess was so taken with the romantic appeal of bog oak—a form of preserved ancient timber, common in Ireland and in parts of Scotland, that is easily fashioned into ornaments, jewellery and furniture—that she subsequently ordered an elaborately carved chair from the Dublin firm of James Curran & Sons, whose work was also collected by the royal family for Holyrood House in Edinburgh.<sup>36</sup>

John Hamilton-Gordon, 1<sup>st</sup> marquis of Aberdeen and Temair was another Scottish aristocrat who served as viceroy of Ireland, with one term of office in the 1880s and another during the first decade of the twentieth century. With his wife Ishbel Majoribanks, the Aberdeens were a popular and effective force in Irish home rule politics and in various philanthropic causes in Scotland and Ireland. They were also great craft patrons. At home, for instance, they were visible supporters of efforts to encourage artisan in northeast Scotland. Lady Aberdeen brought a skilled woodcarver from England to their estates to train local people and some of the carvings from Tarves, Ellon and Turriff were displayed in London at the 1887 Home Art and Industries Exhibition.<sup>37</sup> Lord Aberdeen gave a widely reported public speech on the value of craft education when he opened a ‘Fancy Fair’ in Elgin in September 1887 to raise funds for a School of Science and Art in the town, adding his voice to popular calls for investment in art and design as a necessary public good.<sup>38</sup> In Ireland, Lady Aberdeen was particularly associated with support for the textile industry. She was famed for her commissions from prominent Dublin dress and lace makers of elaborate court dresses for public display, with decorative embroidered and lace panels in Celtic design. She wore these in London as well as Dublin for years after her

husband's formal connection with Ireland had ended.<sup>39</sup> Lady Aberdeen gave similarly energetic support to women's craft industries in Scotland and was invited to open the first display of 'home industries' held in Dundee in 1891. The exhibits here included the work of professional and amateur local craftsmen and women, along with works of art and a large loan section including 'some valuable exhibits from the Ladies' Work Society, London, the last mentioned being chiefly the work of the marchioness of Lorne' (daughter of Queen Victoria). Lady Aberdeen provided a loan of a quilt designed in the mid eighteenth century by the then countess of Aberdeen.<sup>40</sup> The women's industry sections of other Scottish exhibitions, including the first international in Edinburgh in 1886, also commanded patronage support from Lady Aberdeen along with the duchess of Buccleuch, the marchioness of Lothian and countess of Rosebery.<sup>41</sup> Lady Aberdeen remained prominent in her public support of Scottish craftwork throughout her life. In great old age when a widow in 1933, she was described in newspaper reports of a Holyrood garden party wearing an 'heirloom Paisley shawl of duck-egg green.'<sup>42</sup> The connection between noble and royal women and the hand-made Paisley shawl industry, that most iconic of high quality textile crafts, was long established and celebrated. During a downturn in trade in 1842, Queen Victoria famously purchased seventeen Paisley shawls, which she wore on notable occasions, including the christening of the Prince of Wales the same year.<sup>43</sup> Her widely reported display of Paisley shawls were important for giving periodic boosts to the industry, as in 1888 at the time of the 'golden jubilee'.<sup>44</sup> The Princess of Wales received such a shawl to mark her wedding in 1863<sup>45</sup> and the tradition continued into the twentieth century, with antique shawls presented to Princess Mary for the royal wedding of 1922.<sup>46</sup>

Other organizations with noble leadership or committee membership also provided encouragement and support for Scottish craftsmen. One of these was the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, notably under the chairmanship of the marquis of Breadalbane mid-century, who was associated through patronage with the production of Mauchline ware in Ayrshire. Mauchline ware was a type of ornamented woodwork, known generically as 'treen', which was initially produced as

decorated snuff boxes and later developed into other products such as ladies work boxes and card cases.<sup>47</sup> The main output of Mauchline ware was from a small factory owned by the Smith brothers and employing local craft workers, designers and artists, many of them women. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Smiths enjoyed support from the Board of Trustees and one of their sons was trained at the Trustees-owned design school in Edinburgh.<sup>48</sup> A particularly successful line of goods comprised boxes decorated with different Scottish tartans, which claimed authenticity at a time of contested clan heritage through reference to the Society of Antiquaries in a book titled *Authenticated Tartans of the Clans and Families of Scotland, Painted by Machinery*, which the Smith brothers had printed in 1850 in Ayr and dedicated to Breadalbane in his role as President of the Society. The marquis was already a patron of the firm, which had named a popular range of tartan buttons after him. Through this connection, the firm also enjoyed the patronage of Prince Albert—confirming a hierarchical relationship from locality to royalty that was reproduced in numerous areas of craft production. Mauchline ware was exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition, winning several prizes along with national prestige.<sup>49</sup>

The Society of Antiquaries, with its many noble members and large museum collection, offered endorsements and support for craft products with a distinctive Scottish historic identity, and the organization also provided antiquarian models for inspiration or reproduction. It frequently commissioned copies of its own artefacts—as casts in plaster or metal—either for display in other museum collections or for gifting to donors or sellers of important items, as in 1888 when Macleod of Cadboll, at Invergordon Castle in Ross-shire sold his Cadboll Celtic brooches, with much regret, for £200 plus copies of the originals that were already owned and displayed in Edinburgh.<sup>50</sup> The Society also purchased copies of objects in other museum collections or *in situ* in prominent Scottish buildings, as in 1850 when they acquired a set of casts of medieval sculpture at Roslin Chapel, made by local craftsmen, for what was described as a reasonable 27s.<sup>51</sup> Archaeological excavations gave work to local craftsmen, as in 1848 when the Society commissioned two plaster copies of the recently recovered

skull of Queen Mary of Guelders, consort of James II, from Henry Laing of Clyde Street in Edinburgh, a seal engraver and manufacturer and maker of Tassie-style medallions in plaster and paste.<sup>52</sup> The removal of historic interior woodwork for museum display was also undertaken by craftsmen working for the Society, as in 1848 when the famous cabinet making firm of Trotter & Co. carefully dismantled a medieval painted ceiling from Blyth's Close in Edinburgh, which was about to be demolished, at a cost of £5 9s. 2d.<sup>53</sup>

The appeal of ancient Celtic and Roman precious metal wares led to several requests to the Society of Antiquaries for permission to copy for commercial sale. The Hunterston Brooch, made of silver and gold filigree, which was found in Ayrshire in 1828 and widely exhibited when in private ownership before it was sold to the Society in the 1880s, was the most famous and was reproduced in numerous forms, hand crafted and factory made. The popularity of such finds at a time when historicised styles were fashionable meant that jewellers petitioned for private access to the originals in order to make their reproductions. The Society frequently resisted these requests, but to ensure the highest quality output, also allowed some authorised copies by the best craftsmen. One of those chosen was the Edinburgh firm of Marshall & Sons, long established, prominent in Edinburgh's elite Goldsmith's Company and involved in the organizing committee of the 1888–9 major craft exhibition in the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh under the patronage of a host of Scottish aristocrats.<sup>54</sup>

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In addition to their formal roles connected to prominent public office, Scottish aristocrats as estate owners and public figures within their own localities also routinely commissioned local craftsmen to make presentation objects for gifting to visiting dignitaries. Wooden caskets enclosing 'loyal addresses' were one type of gift, normally presented at formal public meetings that included a

ceremonial reading of the address. A number of these were described in detail to mark the Scottish tour of Tory Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, in December 1888. In the south-west, a carved Galloway bog oak casket was presented at one meeting and at another there was a wood and silver box crafted by John Reid & Sons, cabinet makers in Ayr. The most spectacular and evocatively Scottish accompanied the loyal address from the Ayr, Newton and Wallacetown Conservative Association, which was presented:

in a casket made of oak given by General Sir Claude Alexander and grown on the banks of the Ayr on the Ballochmyle estate. The lid is carved by an Ayr workman in illustration of Tam O'Shanter's ride across Alloway's Auld Brig.<sup>55</sup>

Prizes for local events with competitions, such as agricultural shows and highland games, which were mostly under noble patronage, also commonly generated commissions from local craftsmen for engraved medals, cups, decorative boxes and plaques.<sup>56</sup>

By providing employment for local craftsmen, noble patrons and their managers exploited the cultivated resources found on their estates, such as the wool produced in the Sanquhar area of the Scottish borders, and also exploited the natural resources above and below their land. Coal and iron were famously developed on the duke of Hamilton's estates south of Glasgow, though the latter was for industrial not craft use. Less spectacular and lucrative, but locally significant, seams of clay were developed in the early nineteenth century and many estates invested in local potteries where there was clay suitable for manufacturing uses. The potteries of Prestonpans east of Edinburgh were initially under estate patronage making pedestrian wares like flower pots and ceramic pipes for local consumption before commercial success gave rise to greater independence and a broader range of decorative products that were manufactured well into the twentieth century.<sup>57</sup> A number of Fife potteries were also founded with aristocratic support, the most successful being Robert Heron & Son of Kirkcaldy, who produced high quality Wemyss ware named after the earl of Wemyss.<sup>58</sup> Another was

the Dunmore pottery in Stirlingshire, which is explored in detail below. The relationship between the Scottish nobility and patronage of craft pottery was such that the *Pottery Gazette* in 1883 highlighted the role of ‘country houses in promoting the fortunes of eastern Scottish potteries’.<sup>59</sup>

The mineral resources found in Scotland include gold deposits in some areas, which have been mined on a small scale since antiquity. In the late 1860s, at much the same time as the famous Australia gold rush, there was a widely reported gold rush in the Kildonan area of Sutherland, on the estates of the duke of Sutherland.<sup>60</sup> In June 1869 alone there were said to be 170 licences issued to pan for gold and, it was claimed, ‘the fortunate few’ made from 8s. to 14s. per day for their efforts.<sup>61</sup> Although not fashioned into jewellery on the estate itself, the duke sanctioned certain Inverness jewellers to purchase the gold on site. The most prominent of these craftsmen was J. P. Wilson ‘who has received orders from His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales for a number of articles of jewellery made of the Sutherland gold.’<sup>62</sup> Wilson, who styled himself ‘Court Goldsmith and Jeweller at Inverness’ on the strength of this commission, recruited further craftsmen ‘accustomed to gold work’ for his workshop in summer 1869, using the *Scotsman* for advertising and he also exhibited raw Kildonan gold nuggets in his shop window, offering ‘a fertile topic of conversation and comment.’<sup>63</sup> Local individuals, including the young schoolmaster at Helmsdale on the Sutherland estate, James Campbell, developed an entrepreneurial interest in the gold rush and engaged in a frequent correspondence with Robert Naughton, another jeweller of Inverness, over gold purchases and jewellery commissions that he organized, which included a ring for the minister at Canisbay, the Rev J. MacPherson. Campbell also acquired garnets from local workmen, sending these and some gold to Naughton to make a cravat pin for himself.<sup>64</sup> The gold rush ended when the Duke withdrew permission for all further licenses to be issued, his main concern being the physical damage to his estate and to the interests of a sheep-farming tenant.<sup>65</sup> But before doing so, he was gifted or purchased local gold for himself for personal jewellery, with some of the gold crafted into a fine Celtic styled cross decorated with Scottish freshwater pearls.<sup>66</sup>

Aristocratic wives were particularly involved in craft patronage on their husband's estates in Scotland. Wives and children were often left behind while husbands travelled to Edinburgh and London, mainly for reasons of economy—since a man on his own was cheaper to lodge than a man travelling with family and necessary servants—but also to ensure that someone remained at home to keep an eye on estate affairs. Elite women were the conventional source of community support for impoverished families in rural areas and many made conspicuous efforts towards personal consumption of locally made goods. In widowhood, it was usual for aristocratic women to depart estates in favour of the new generation, but widows with young or unmarried sons formed strong bonds with their tenants in the interests of the heir and his future and several were famed as craft patrons. One of these was Lady Katherine Ramsay of Balmain, sister of the childless estate owner, brought up at Balmain in Aberdeenshire in the second half of the eighteenth century, whose husband inherited the property, which in turn passed to their son Sir Thomas Ramsay in 1806. Sir Thomas was mostly an absentee owner serving abroad in the East India Company and his first wife was English and lived in London. As daughter, sister, wife and then a widow, Lady Katherine was resident on the family estate throughout her life and in the absence of son and daughter in law, was a key figure in the matter of estate management. Her activities were such as to generate newspaper report in 1814.

Lady Ramsay of Balmain has proposed a subscription to which she promised to contribute liberally herself, for the purpose of establishing a school at Montrose, for the gratis instruction of the daughters of poor inhabitants, in the art of making lace; her Ladyship having observed the excellent effects of such establishment in Devonshire, where girls are kept in constant employment.<sup>67</sup>

Having raised a subscription, Lady Katherine brought a skilled lace maker from Devon to teach the craft and rented and fitted up a schoolroom. Her celebrity in this was such that she received



commendations from the Board of Trustees for Manufactures, who also gave her financial support for the undertaking.<sup>68</sup>

Lady Mary Montgomerie, mother of the earl of Eglinton, the later viceroy of Ireland, who was widowed in 1814, was another early patron of embroidery and lacework, this time in Ayrshire.<sup>69</sup> She had a particular interest in whitework embroidery, for which there was a flourishing demand through much of the century for use as women's clothing such as collars, but particularly for fine baby christening robes and caps. A notable widow-patron of the later nineteenth century was Lady Anne Speirs of Elderslie, daughter of the earl of Radnor, who lost her husband within a few years of her marriage in the 1870s, after which she took an active role in estate management in Ayrshire on behalf of her only son, a role she sustained long after her son reached adulthood.<sup>70</sup> One of her initiatives generated locally made textile goods of sufficient quality to be featured in the Chicago International Exhibition of 1893:

Lady Spiers's school at Houston is well to the fore with a rich creamy satin cushion embroidered with big sprays of thistle, a white satin screen on which are shaded poppies, and a very original cushion centre—owls on the boughs of trees very finely embroidered in white thread on a background of Tussore silk. There is also a charming piece of Russian embroidery from the same school.<sup>71</sup>

Perhaps the most significant Scottish aristocratic widow to offer craft patronage was Catherine, dowager countess of Dunmore, daughter of the earl of Pembroke, who was widowed in 1845 when her only son was just four years old, and like Lady Speirs, undertook to run the family estates until he reached adulthood.<sup>72</sup> The Dunmore property comprised large tracts of land in both Stirlingshire and the Isle of Harris, the latter purchased by the 5<sup>th</sup> earl, Lady Catherine's father-in-law, in 1834, though it was subsequently sold off in parcels between 1867 and 1919. The dowager countess rarely visited Lewis, but from a distance took an interest in the affairs of the islanders in the wake of the famines of

the mid-1840s. Relief schemes and the usual endeavours to encourage emigration were attempted, but, though they had limited real impact on the problems of the island, most of her more direct interventions were focussed on women and their potential for producing fine craftwork. She founded an embroidery school at An-t-Ob in the late 1840s, though this did not flourish.<sup>73</sup> She next sought to develop the output of knitted stockings made in the home, and in this undertaking she grafted her efforts onto those of another genteel woman with connections on the island, Mrs Frances Thomas.

Mrs Thomas, from Edinburgh, was the wife of a naval officer who spent many years in the 1840s and '50s as captain of a survey ship in and around the Western Isles. His wife accompanied him on most journeys and they kept a small house on Harris. Mrs Thomas was aware of the miserable conditions of the islanders, and to help them during the harsh 1840s both taught and encouraged the production of knitted stockings for sale. So good was the output that Harris stockings, using local wools and natural dyes, were awarded first prize at the Edinburgh International Exhibition of 1886 and, it was claimed:

from Ceylon to Labrador the Harris stockings have become “a boon and a blessing to man” especially to solitary bachelors, by reducing caring to a minimum.<sup>74</sup>

By the 1890s, Mrs Thomas's stocking knitters in full-time employment numbered over 400 women and she was also closely involved in another island craft industry, the production of Harris tweed in partnership with the dowager countess of Dunmore.

The Dunmore input was seen initially in the production of Murray family tartan in Harris tweed and the manufacture of tweed suits for Dunmore estate workers. The dowager countess then used her elite connections to promote Harris tweed as a suitable cloth for outdoor wear for sporting gentlemen. She and Mrs Thomas introduced mechanisms to improve the quality and consistency of home made output and some of the best weavers were taken to Alloa on the Dunmore Stirlingshire estate for further training in intricate pattern-making by skilled lowland weavers and designers. Lady Dunmore's

encouragement of Harris tweed marked a transition from estate-focused patronage for mostly local consumption to a more vigorously commercial approach directed at wider markets. Retail outlets were established in Edinburgh and central London in the 1860s and tweed and tweed makers were frequently displayed at the international exhibitions. By the late 1880s and the founding of the Scottish Home Industries Association under the patronage of the Princess Louise, marchioness of Lorne, Harris tweed was a well-known success story that other noblewomen sought to emulate in other forms of hand-crafted textiles.<sup>75</sup> The tweed market was so substantial that fraudulent English-made stock was sold under the trademark 'Harris Tweed', giving rise to a successful Board of Trade prosecution in the London courts in 1906, instigated by the duchess of Sutherland on behalf of the Scottish Home Industries Association.

The real 'Harris' tweeds are to be distinguished from the imitations by the softness of texture, and length for length they are not so heavy. At the same time, there is an oily feeling on the surface, and a smell of peat, which can easily be recognised by those who have lived in districts where peat is used as fuel. Their virtues are rain-resisting qualities, beautifully blended colours, strength and elasticity in wear ... The real Harris tweed yarns are manipulated by hand, and are therefore superior and softer than the imitations.<sup>76</sup>

The Scottish Home Industries Association, like the similar body in Ireland, was devoted to organizing the commercial sale of home made rural craft textiles, mostly aimed at the high fashion market and had an identity that was built on aristocratic and gentry associations with the highlands and romantic Scottishness.<sup>77</sup> In a speech given during a tour of the Western Isles in 1907 on behalf of the SHIA, the duchess of Sutherland, presiding over a concert in Stornoway, praised the noble and genteel women patrons who had acted as pioneers in supporting the Harris Tweed industry in its early days:

Before the Scottish Home Industries Association was established on its present basis there was on a small scale a success of sentiments achieved by the late Lady Dunmore, who was the

guardian angel of her people, and by the late Lady Rosebery, who would often talk to me of her desire to help the poor people in the islands, and who, I am sure, if she had lived would have closely associated herself with the Scottish Home Industries Association. It was in thinking of her interest that Mrs Beckett, better known to you as Mrs Thomas, and who was until her death a director of the Scottish Home Industries Association, used to encourage me and my co-directors, who have given me so much time and labour in this work without one penny of remuneration, to make a brave fight to establish some lasting benefit for the spinners and weavers of the Outer Hebrides.<sup>78</sup>

In addition to the textile craft schemes on her highland estates, Lady Dunmore was also the patron of commercial endeavours elsewhere. The Dunmore Pottery near Airth in rural Stirlingshire, run by the Gardner family, like many others throughout Scotland, was established in the late eighteenth century to take advantage of a seam of local clay that could be fashioned into domestic wares and tiles for local consumption. It remained a small and modest undertaking for decades, employing a handful of skilled potters before, in the third generation of family management, a talented individual, Peter Gardener who took over his father's business in 1866, attracted the interest of the estate owners and the profile of the pottery began to rise, with female members of the Dunmore family taking the lead, including the dowager countess and her daughter-in-law, Lady Gertrude Coke, daughter of the earl of Leicester.

Peter Gardner was a clever entrepreneur, particularly adept at exploiting local and international exhibitions to forward his reputation. He was also skilled in managing a product image that exploited aristocratic associations, much in the manner of that great pottery entrepreneur of the eighteenth century, Josiah Wedgwood. One of the first exhibition appearances to generate newspaper interest was at the Highland and Agricultural Society's Inverness show in the summer of 1874, just a few years after he took over the family firm.

A new industry has been inaugurated on the estate of the Earl of Dunmore, Stirlingshire—namely the manufacture of pottery, after the celebrated Valerie pattern of France. The ware is brown, but it is extremely light. Its appearance, say in a tea service, might at first sight seem *outré*, but the fashion has, we believe, been set for it by its use in garden parties by the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. A large assortment of articles made at the Dunmore Pottery are exhibited here on Mr Jenkinson's stand.<sup>79</sup>

The quality of Dunmore pottery attracted much attention, but equally important in generating prestige was the input of the younger countess of Dunmore, which included the design of some of the early pieces, as reported in an English provincial newspaper of the late 1870s in 'The Ladies' Column: By One of Themselves':

The blue and white Japanese china has long been a favourite addition to all pretty rooms of modern style. For variety of colour and excellence of manufacture I think the Dunmore pottery a valuable addition. Some of it greatly resembles the "Valerie ware" in appearance, but it is not porous as that is, and consequently lasts much longer and better. The newest shape in this ware is that of a large melon, with a hole the top for the admission of a flowerpot. The shape was designed by the Countess of Dunmore, and the colours are either bright yellow or bluish green.<sup>80</sup>

Elite associations were not only articulated here by the link with female aristocracy, but were further highlighted in the same article by reference to one of the customers for these wares, for it was stated, 'I hear that two dozen of these Melon-shaped vases are ordered for the saloon of the new Cunard steamship which is to run from Liverpool to America, with pre eminently good accommodation for passengers.'

By the early 1880s, Peter Gardner had a retail outlet in Edinburgh's New Town<sup>81</sup> and the first of the Scottish international exhibition, held in Edinburgh in 1886, provided a major opportunity to demonstrate his 'Vases of artistic design, flower pots of various shapes and colours, garden seats and

pedestals of lovely appearance, mantelpiece, table, and other useful and ornamental goods of excellent finish’.

Gardener’s showcasing of ‘invention and skill’ was complemented by another feature of the display that generate comment, ‘The lady in attendance at this stand attracts a good deal of attention, she being attired in neat Highland costume.’<sup>82</sup> The costume in question comprised the Murray tartan to represent the Dunmore family and to hint at that other area of the dowager countess’s activities in the promotion of textile and specifically Harris tweed production on her western isles estates. Dunmore’s success was sealed when Queen Victoria, having visited the exhibition, ‘commanded’ Peter Gardner to attend Holyrood ‘with specimens of his goods for her Majesty to select from.’<sup>83</sup> Victoria’s choice of ornamental wares decorated with a crackled red and turquoise glaze subsequently led to these being marketed under the title ‘Queen’s Vases’.<sup>84</sup>

Dunmore pottery was exhibited abroad as well as in Scotland, including the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876, but it was the Glasgow Exhibition of 1888 that saw the biggest and most spectacular display, with the ‘Lady Dunmore Bowl’ garnering much praise.<sup>85</sup> Female aristocratic endorsement of Dunmore wares was evident from the frequent appearance of such goods at charity bazaars, which were normally under elite patronage, with the aristocrats and their friends named and described in the press, along with the items for sale in stalls that were usually attended by the ladies in question, or by younger members of their families. A typical event was the Poona Zenana Bazaar in Aberdeen in November 1881, held in the Aberdeen Music Hall to raise funds for a Church of Scotland education mission in India.

No. 2 stall, situated immediately in front of the platform, contains some fine specimens of Dunmore pottery, presented by the Dowager Countess of Aberdeen, as well as a number of other kinds of pottery, the gift of Mrs Leslie Reid.<sup>86</sup>

The Dunmore Pottery closed in 1919 following Peter Gardner's death and all goods remaining were sold, comprising 'the entire stock of real OLD DUNMORE WARE suitable for BAZAARS, CHRISTMAS AND WEDDING PRESENTS; also some BEAUTIFUL ANTIQUE WARE.'<sup>87</sup> Though no longer made, these types of Scottish craft wares, like Paisley shawls, passed quickly to collector status, securing another connection with elite practices, where they have remained ever since.

The Dunmore pottery success was partly founded on tourist interest, which was instrumental in the development of several types of Scottish craft production aimed at the souvenir market.<sup>88</sup> Sanquhar knitwear, Mauchline ware, Harris tweed, whitework embroidery and later Shetland knitting all represented aspects of a popular notion of Scottishness through the materials used in hand production and in the design or decoration. Modestly priced souvenirs using 'relic wood' grown on particular sites—such as the environs of Walter Scott's Abbotsford or numerous places linked to Robert Burns (who had connections with the village of Mauchline in Ayrshire)—were particularly popular.<sup>89</sup> Cumnock ware pottery, originating in Ayrshire and in production mainly as tourist souvenirs to the 1930s, comprised simple earthenware pots decorated with homely Scottish mottos and phrases, many derived from Burns. Visitors to the highlands also looked for souvenirs, which were often in a Celtic style reflecting romanticised Gaelic culture and frequently produced under noble patronage. The Highland Home Industries Association was particularly supportive of craft production in Celtic design. The significance for elite patrons was neatly expressed in 1921 when the body was incorporated as a joint-stock company with a stated purpose 'to raise the standard of workmanship, to encourage the use of Celtic art, it being recognised that arts and industries to be genuine must be national and characteristic of the people who produce them, and to secure markets for the produce of home workers.'<sup>90</sup>

In Argyllshire and the Western Isles, where so many of the ancient models for the Celtic revival were found, Lady Victoria Campbell was active in supporting Celtic inspired artisans and craftwork. Lady Victoria was the pious, unmarried younger daughter of the eighth duke of Argyll, who spent

much of her adult years in the later nineteenth century living on Tiree and supporting local people through employment schemes and classes for children and girls. She was strongly associated with the Celtic Christian revival that came to focus on nearby Iona, which was part of the Argyll estates and which the then duke, Lady Victoria's brother, eventually gave in trust to the Church of Scotland. Iona-based Celtic craft entrepreneurs, Alexander and Euphemia Ritchie were the most famous of Lady Victoria Campbell's protégées. They were both of Argyllshire stock, though art college trained in Glasgow in the 1890s at the height of the Scottish arts and crafts movement, and from a base on the island kept a shop selling Celtic inspired silver, brassware, textiles, wood carving and tooled leather goods. Demand for their wares from growing numbers of tourists and from others with a more academic interest in Celtic art, also led to some of their work being produced in factories in England to their commission and design under the 'Iona Celtic Art' brand name.<sup>91</sup> They were successful business owners as well as inspired craft workers.

Lady Victoria's interests were highlighted in a posthumous biography, written by a female relative in the early twentieth century:

It was [her] sharp eye that detected in the young people of the Ross, Iona and Tiree a genius for woodcarving. She brought instructors to the district that developed the latent talent. Her success in this direction is widely known. Artistic designs lay ready at hand on the sculpture and in the graveyards of Iona and Kirkapoll, Tiree. The pupils found beautiful Celtic patterns to inspire them.<sup>92</sup>

One result of her influence was the production of interior woodcarving for some of the nearby churches, including 'exquisite panels' for the parish church at Hylipoll on Tiree. The use of Celtic motifs on new or refurbished church interiors was a common practice of the later nineteenth century, seen on pew ends as well as alters and communion tables and undertaken, often with local elite patronage, by numerous, nameless, local craftsmen.<sup>93</sup>



Lady Victoria Campbell, like the Aberdeens on their estates in the later nineteenth century, was eager to establish formal craft training through schools and institutes that went beyond the older estate pattern of bringing in established craft workers from elsewhere to train the local population. The later nineteenth-century duchess of Sutherland (Millicent Leveson-Gower, daughter of the earl of Rosslyn) who was a major force in the work of the Highland Home Industries movement, undertaking significant fact-finding tours in support of endeavours to bring well-paid work to the people living in the highlands and islands, was also an active supporter of local training initiatives. She wrote an extensive report to politician Lord Balfour of Burleigh following her tour of Harris and Lewis in 1898, requesting that the Congested Districts Board found a school for technical training in Stornoway, since, ‘I find a singular absence of all ordinary trades in these districts ... there are hardly any masons, shoemakers, blacksmiths, or carpenters...’.<sup>94</sup> She also helped to found a rural technical training school at Golspie and in later years, on her estates in England, was an active campaigner for the banning of lead glazes from the pottery industry, which was a health hazard particularly for women. Her family interest in the Staffordshire potteries led to the founding in 1900 of the Duchess of Sutherland’s Crippled Guild, which focussed on the production of hand crafted metalwork and had a retail outlet in London.<sup>95</sup> Initiatives such as these were met with some commercial success. Indeed, a government report into the home industries in the highlands and islands, published in 1914, was emphatic when it stated ‘one cannot ignore the effect of ladies of great station acting as saleswomen’.<sup>96</sup>

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As these illustrations suggest, the prominence of the Scottish aristocracy in nineteenth-century craft patronage was striking and it was also strikingly female in character. But though lauded by contemporaries, modern historians have been more critical in their assessments of the roles of the rich in poverty-ridden districts and there was a tension throughout the period between commercial

encouragement and philanthropy, particularly where the latter appeared regressive in tone, designed to reinforce social hierarchies and relationships and moralize rather than generate change.<sup>97</sup> Undertakings like Lady Aberdeen's Irish villages, which toured the international exhibitions, or the activities of the various home industry associations in Ireland and highland Scotland, which sought to train mainly home-based women in labour-intensive but poorly paid 'traditional' handicrafts like lacemaking or knitting, have garnered criticism.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, the economics of schemes in which poor women fashioned luxury goods for sale at high prices, with the profits going to middlemen, has left a bitter legacy in some craft communities that resonate to the present.<sup>99</sup> The impact of these undertakings on the skills and creativity of practitioners was also subject to subtle contemporary critique. Art needle workers belonging to the English Arts and Crafts movement also made use of outworkers and similarly stressed the moral value attached to the cultivation of rural craft skills, but were disinclined to put work to poor homeworkers. Annie Garnett of the Spinnery in Windermere in the Lake District, whose exquisite textiles and embroideries were sold through Liberty of London, found such women 'hidebound by tradition'. She consequently employed the better-educated daughters of tradesmen, who were more accommodating of her artistic interpretations.<sup>100</sup>

Yet Scottish aristocrats also had a longer and more complex history of connections with craft production than these often criticised interventions via the 'home industries' movement would suggest. Highland noblewomen in the first half of the eighteenth century commissioned fine woven cloth from their estates to wear in London and were part of a community where they were commonly taught such craft skills themselves as girls along with practical housewifery.<sup>101</sup> Romanticism bred a new wave of genteel craftswomen. Ishbel Aberdeen, in her later memoirs, recorded that as a child in the 1850s spending part of the year on the family estate in Inverness-shire, she learned the 'mysteries' of spinning from one of the old peasant women and 'from the wool of our own sheep, spun black and white plaids for my father, and for such special friends as Mr Gladstone and the old Duke of Westminster.'<sup>102</sup> Indeed, many Scottish aristocrats were amateur practitioners in one form or another. Some, like Lady

Dunmore, took an interest in design while Lady Speirs commissioned a photographic portrait c. 1890 showing complex embroidery on her lap, seemingly working at it herself.<sup>103</sup> Celtic woodcarving was not only encouraged as a native craft to bring much needed income to local people, it was also a popular hobby for some local elites. One of these was Sir Malcolm M'Neill of Colonsay, who, like many lairds, sold his estate to live in Edinburgh where he made a career in government administration. His *Scotsman* obituary of 1919 praised his public service, but also underscored the preoccupations of his private life.

Outside his official work Sir Malcolm M'Neill's chief interest lay in archaeology. The sand dunes of Colonsay and Oransay, with their buried pre-historic remains, were his first happy hunting ground. He loved the Celtic sculptured stones of the Highlands and Islands with a love that not only prompted him to take rubbings and fill note-books with careful outline drawings of their intricate designs, but induced him to learn the craft of wood-carving, so that he might reproduce their often quaint and oftener beautiful designs into the furnishings of his residence at Manor Place. Thus even his home breathed the atmosphere of Oransay and Iona, of Islay and many a lonely spot on the mainland where he had discovered a gem of Celtic art.<sup>104</sup>

There was a romantic form of escapism in these types of craftwork among elite practitioners for not only did they fulfil the functions of 'hobbies' for a leisured few, they provided a connection, however fanciful, with people, land and a sense of the past. It might be argued, therefore, that the Scottish aristocratic focus on artisans on their estates was one device, in the face of massive commercial and agricultural change, to retain ties with and emotional investment in inherited property through a small group of easily identified, sympathetic and manageable people with skills and culture that set them apart from the faceless masses and that they themselves could share through ownership of the goods that they made and through sometimes taking a direct personal role in such hand-based manufacture.

Aristocratic promotion of and romantic preoccupation with craft practice continued into the twentieth century, though new government bodies, such as the Rural Industries Bureau, were increasingly prominent and stepped in to support communities of craft workers whose position was rendered vulnerable with the post First World War financial collapse among the great estates.<sup>105</sup> One significant twentieth-century figure was the marquis of Bute, whose estates extended from southwest Scotland to the Scottish islands and included Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute. Several generations of this family had promoted craft workers on their estates, including the support of potters associated with Cumnock 'motto ware' ceramics, whose popularity was closely linked to Burns tourism in Ayrshire. The rebuilding of Mount Stuart following a fire in the later nineteenth century was a major source of crafts patronage, though many of the artisans and new furnishings were English and a significant input came from Welsh craftsmen who were also employed in restorations at the Bute-owned Cardiff Castle.<sup>106</sup> One of the most remarkable acts of Bute patronage was the founding in 1912 of the Dovecot tapestry studio in Edinburgh, with master weavers brought from William Morris's tapestry works at Merton Abbey in Surrey and commissions to make tapestries in the antique style showing famous scenes from Bute family history for hanging at Mount Stuart. Bute's connection with the studio, which survives to the present, though it has had a chequered history, continued through much of the twentieth century.<sup>107</sup> The Bute family's support of Scottish 'traditional' weaving crafts was reported in a newspaper account of the 1934 'Traders' Exhibition at Rothsay.'

There was a large attendance in the Winter Gardens, Rothsay, on Saturday afternoon, when the countess of Dumfries opened Rothsay Traders' Exhibition. Special features included an arts and crafts section, where there is a handloom from the Island of St Kilda, now the property of the earl of Dumfries. There are also in attendance St Kildan weavers under the direction of Mr Alexander Ferguson, a well-known native of that island.<sup>108</sup>

Though set apart by wealth and position, the Scottish aristocracy were just as susceptible to the cultures of romance and nostalgia that were associated with craftwork as most of the Scottish

population by the interwar years. The iconic status of St Kilda and its weaving community, as celebrated here, was a function of the island's final evacuation in 1930, which still resonated in the popular imagination for its pathos and tragedy as old ways of island life finally slipped away. The passing of an age of handwork was recorded in exhibitions and also in the press, where the connection with aristocratic patrons was noted and celebrated, as in the following *Scotsman* report of September 23, 1929.

LAST OF THE HANDLOOM WEAVERS. Mr Angus Munro, farmer, South Tullich, Glenarary, died on Saturday at the age of 76 years. When a tenant of Auchnagoul township, Inveraray, he carried on business as a handloom weaver, the products of his loom in the nature of brown croftal cloth, being purchased by H.R.H. Princess Louise and other Royal personages, who had the cloth made into garments. Members of the nobility from different places also purchased and wore Auchnagoul croftal. Mr Munro was the last handloom weaver in that district.<sup>109</sup>

And did this investment of aristocratic effort and emotional engagement make a difference to local people and economies, particularly in rural areas and on the great estates? The answer is probably a qualified 'yes'. Certainly in some parts of Scotland, particularly where the Home Industries movement was active, craft production provided employment for women and men where none other existed. In the Highlands and Islands in 1914 the considered response from government investigator, economist W. R. Scott, was that there were 'good grounds for regarding the future of these industries with a considerable degree of confidence, providing their development is guided wisely.'<sup>110</sup> But remuneration was low, middlemen sometimes made excessive and much resented profits and fashion-driven demand could be fickle. For other places, however, the picture was more positive. In Ayrshire, a county of small towns and mixed employment, with numerous smaller noble estates as well as the vast land holdings of the earl of Bute, the craft economy was robust and growing throughout the nineteenth

century. Although the clothing trades were dominant here as elsewhere, the numbers of cabinet makers and associated finely crafted wood trades, including treen makers but excluding carpenters and joiners was 215 in 1831, more than doubling to 471 in 1861 and 1,387 by 1891, an increase of well over 600% over the course of sixty years. The manufacture of earthenware, china and pottery, which was largely craft workshop based outside the cities, consisted of 24 workers in Ayrshire in 1831, was much the same in 1861, but had risen to 126 workers, almost certainly all associated with Cumnock motto ware manufacture, by 1891. Though the numbers are small, the rise was over 500%.<sup>111</sup> Fife and Stirlingshire had similar profiles as did much of the lowland north-east and though the crafts that were practiced in rural Aberdeenshire were less varied than elsewhere, that county manifested an equally vibrant craft economy that existed and flourished in parallel with modern factory production in Glasgow, Dundee or Edinburgh.

Some craft sectors were closely connected to tourism, especially in southwest Scotland, including Ayrshire, where the making of tourist souvenirs flourished through much of the nineteenth century. The tourist industry was an increasingly important feature of the Scottish economy, but here, as elsewhere, the demand was for ever-cheaper goods and not finely made and inevitably expensive items and the gap was filled not by local makers but by factory produce, often supplied from England. Some craft entrepreneurs, like the Ritchie silver and brass Celtic art workers on Iona, controlled this lower quality production by commissioning factory-produced goods to their own designs, but that was rare. In other instances court cases were taken by noble patrons to protect Scottish quality production and maintain an exclusive brand identity, as with Harris tweed, but again that was rare. Moreover, the compromising of Scottish craftwork as popularity increased was not always by shoddy goods. In a curious twist to the Ayrshire whitework story, demand, which flourished with the fashion for embroidered christening gowns, was partly supplied under the fraudulent guise of genuine Ayrshire manufacture by nuns working in convents in Germany, where costs were low but quality was high and hence impossible to differentiate from local production.<sup>112</sup> Some Scottish artisans acting under aristocratic patronage were

impressive entrepreneurs, such as the Ritchies of Iona or Peter Gardner of Dunmore, but most were not. The Scottish craft businesses that did best in economic terms were those based in big towns and cities, such as decorative woodworkers Scott Morton & Co. in Edinburgh, where aristocratic patronage still counted for prestige and for some aspects of production, but was part of a broader spectrum of market positioning and supply.

The craft sector in Scotland was probably kept alive for longer than it might have otherwise been by the interventions and interest of Scottish aristocrats, but as the aristocratic estates went into decline and fashions changed in the interwar years most ceased production. The post Second World War revival in the Scottish craft economy, other than in some areas of textiles such as hand-made knitwear or tweed, was for a very different type of product made by studio-based craft artists. These people sometimes lived in rural areas and were occasionally supported on great estates where craft workshops can still be found today. But they were and are mostly urban, middle class and art college trained, funded by the state to a great extent through its cultural agencies, often supplying state patrons such as museum or gallery collections or exclusive demand by a wealthy few for unique items of decorative ware.

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The authors wish to thank the Leverhulme Trust for financial support for the research on which this article is based (RPG-2012-247 ‘Artisans and the craft economy in Scotland, 1780-1914’).

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<sup>2</sup> David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven and London, 1990); David Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and decline in modern Britain* (New Haven and London, 1994); Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven and London, 1997). W. D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property: The very wealthy in Britain since the industrial revolution* (London, 1981). On waning cultural dominance, see, Andrea Poole, ‘Conspicuous Presumption: The National Gallery of Great Britain’s Board of Trustees and the Decline of Aristocratic Cultural Authority, 1890-1939’, UMI Dissertations Publishing, Ph.D. thesis (University of Toronto, 2005).

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<sup>4</sup> T. M. Devine, *The Great Highland Famine: Hunger, emigration and the Scottish highlands in the nineteenth century* (Edinburgh, 1988). On relationships built around village life see Richard Olney, ‘Squire and community: T. G. Dixon at Holton-le-Moor, 1906-1937’, *Rural History* 18 (2007) 183–200. On leisure, sport and celebrations, see Christine Stevens, ‘Personal links between landlord and



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<sup>5</sup> Sarah Webster, 'Estate improvement and the professionalization of land agents on the Eremont estates in Sussex and Yorkshire, 1770–1835', *Rural History* 18(2007) 47-69, at pp??.

<sup>6</sup> Such as Poppy Myerscough, 'The Fishers of York: A Provincial Carver's Workshop in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries', UMI Dissertations Publishing, PhD. thesis (University of York, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> As reported by Lady Holland and cited in Li, 'Arabian nights entertainment'.

<sup>8</sup> Rab Houston, *Peasant Petitions: Social relations and economic life on landed estates, 1600-1850* (London and New York, 2014) ch 1 & 2 similarly draws parallels between Scottish and Irish estates.

<sup>9</sup> On perceptions of Irish peasant culture see, K. J. James, 'Handicraft, mass manufacture and rural female labour: Industrial work in north-west Ireland, 1890-1914', *Rural History* 17 (2006) 47–63.

<sup>10</sup> *Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799*, edited by Sir John Sinclair (Wakefield, 1973-83), XIX, 200 (Aberdeen).

<sup>11</sup> See Virginia Wills (ed.), *Reports on the Annexed Estates from the Records of the Forfeited Estates Preserved in the Scottish Record Office* (Edinburgh, 1973).

<sup>12</sup> T. C. Smout, 'The landowner and the planned village', in Nick Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (eds), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement* (Edinburgh, 1970), 89–95; Stana Nenadic, *Lairds and Luxury: The highland gentry in eighteenth-century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> *Statistical Account*, XVI 611 (Peterhead).

<sup>14</sup> Stana Nenadic, 'Designers in the nineteenth-century Scottish fancy textile industry: Education, employment and exhibition', *Journal of Design History* 27 (2014) 115-31.

<sup>15</sup> Parliamentary Papers [PP], 1914 (Cd 7564), *Report to the Board of Agriculture for Scotland on Home Industries in the Highlands and Islands*, 41. Founded in 1884, by 1911 there were 132 affiliated classes or societies in England and Wales. The Scottish bodies are explored below. For background see,

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Janice Helland, “‘Good work and clever design:’ Early exhibitions of the Home Arts and Industries Association’, *Journal of Modern Craft* 5 (2012) 275–93.

<sup>16</sup> Annie Tindley, *The Sutherland Estate, 1850-1920: Aristocratic decline, estate management and land reform* (Edinburgh, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland [NRS]. Papers of the Montague, Douglas, Scott Family, Dukes of Buccleuch. GD224/15. 53–4: Account due to Samuel Young, 1797–8.

<sup>18</sup> NRS. GD224/511/2: Letter dated 14 Feb. 1842.

<sup>19</sup> NRS. GD224/492: Estate correspondence from William Maxwell, Chamberlain, 1858. Examples of Sanquhar woven double sided carpets—called Crawick carpets—can be seen in Dumfries Museum. See also, James Brown, *The History of Sanquhar* (Dumfries, 1891), 360–3.

<sup>20</sup> Brown, *History of Sanquhar*, ch. 10. For examples and pattern histories see,

[<http://www.futuremuseum.co.uk/collections/life-work/key-industries/textiles/sanquhar-knitting.aspx> accessed 6 Oct. 2015]. F. M. McNeil, *The Silver Bough: the local festivals of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1968) v4; G. K. Neville, *The Mother Town: civic ritual, symbol, and experience in the Borders of Scotland* (Oxford, 1994).

<sup>21</sup> *Scotsman*, 10 Apr. 1887. NRS. GD224/184: News cuttings and miscellaneous papers relating to the Handicraft and Industrial Exhibition held in the Buccleuch Memorial Science and Art Institute and Museum, Hawick 1887.

<sup>22</sup> NRS. GD224/184/6: Handicraft and Industrial Exhibition, Hawick 1887.

<sup>23</sup> NRS. GD224/1001/14: Edinburgh Exhibition of Decorative Handiwork, 1888. Advertising handbills

<sup>24</sup> NRS. GD224/1001/14; Edinburgh Exhibition of Decorative Handiwork, 1888. Correspondence with the duke of Buccleuch’s man of business. St Andrews Square, Edinburgh.

<sup>25</sup> NRS. GD224/1001/14: Edinburgh Exhibition of Decorative Handiwork, 1888. Advertising handbills.

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- <sup>26</sup> Stana Nenadic, 'Exhibiting India in nineteenth-century Scotland and the impact on commerce, industry and popular culture', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 34 (2014) 67–89.
- <sup>27</sup> See Brian Bonnyman, *The Third Duke of Buccleuch and Adam Smith: Estate management and improvement in enlightenment Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2014).
- <sup>28</sup> See criticism of Lady Bective, an Irish peer with estates in the north of England, and other 'titled ladies' for 'boasting so much about their desire for the welfare of British Industries' without 'practical proof of their earnestness'. *The Era*, 24 Sept. 1881, report on the 'Straw Plaiting Exhibition' in St James' Hall, London.
- <sup>29</sup> NRS. NG1/3/26: Board of Trustees Minutes. 26 Sept. 1840.
- <sup>30</sup> NRS. NG1/3/26: Board of Trustees Minutes. 4 Apr. 1840.
- <sup>31</sup> NRS. NG1/3/26: Board of Trustees Minutes. 31 Jan. 1844.
- <sup>32</sup> Nenadic, 'Exhibiting India', page number??.
- <sup>33</sup> See, P. H. Hoffenberg, 'Promoting traditional Indian art at home and abroad: "The Journal of Indian Art and Industry", 1884–1917', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 37 (2004) 192–213.
- <sup>34</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 17 June 1852.
- <sup>35</sup> *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 7 Jan. 1853.
- <sup>36</sup> Oonagh Murray, 'Bog oak carving', *Irish Antique Dealer's Yearbook*, 2006–7 (Dublin, 2006).
- <sup>37</sup> *Scotsman*, 17 Sept. 1887.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> Janice Helland, 'Ishbel Aberdeen's "Irish" dresses: Embroidery, display and meaning, 1886–1909', *Journal of Design History* 26 (2012) 152–167.
- <sup>40</sup> *Dundee Courier & Argus*, 16 Feb. 1891.
- <sup>41</sup> *Belfast Newsletter*, 24 Dec. 1885.
- <sup>42</sup> *Scotsman*, 30 May 1933.

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- <sup>43</sup> Matthew Blair, *The Paisley Shawl and the People Who Made It. A Record of an Interesting Epoch in the History of the Town* (Paisley, 1904).
- <sup>44</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 24 Aug. 1888.
- <sup>45</sup> *Reynolds Newspaper*, 22 Mar. 1863.
- <sup>46</sup> *Scotsman*, 18 Jan. 1922.
- <sup>47</sup> Various Smith developed patents are described in the *Journal of the Society of Arts* from the 1850s to '70s, such as one for 'improvements in strengthening umbrella and walking stick handles, and other articles or details wherein the cross or transverse grain of the wood or other material is subject to strains.' *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 7 Oct. 1859, 720.
- <sup>48</sup> NRS. NG1/3/26: Board of Trustees Minutes, 2 Nov. 1841.
- <sup>49</sup> David Trachtenberg and Thomas Keith, *Mauchline Ware. A collector's guide* (Woodbridge, 2002).
- <sup>50</sup> Edinburgh, National Museum Scotland Special Collections [NMSSC]. Society of Antiquaries Correspondence. UC17/205: Letters between R. B. A. Macleod of Cadboll and J. R. Findlay concerning the purchase of the Cadboll brooches. 1888.
- <sup>51</sup> NMSSC: Society of Antiquaries Minutes, 6 May 1850. On the broader issue of reproductions see, Sally M. Foster, Alice Blackwell and Martin Goldberg, 'The legacy of nineteenth-century replicas for object cultural biographies: Lessons in duplication from 1830s Fife', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 19 (2014) 137–160.
- <sup>52</sup> NMSSC: Society of Antiquaries Minutes, 23 Jul. 1848.
- <sup>53</sup> NMSSC: Society of Antiquaries Minutes, 12 Jan. 1848.
- <sup>54</sup> NMSSC: Society of Antiquaries Correspondence. UC17/467. Letters between Thos. R. Marshall and D. Christison concerning the Hunterston Brooch, 1893.
- <sup>55</sup> *Scotsman*, 1 Dec. 1888.

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- <sup>56</sup> For examples, see Lyon & Turnbull Auctioneers, Edinburgh, *Scottish Silver and Accessories Sale Catalogue*, 13 Aug. 2014.
- <sup>57</sup> Jane Bonnar, *Decorative Pottery at Prestongrange* (Prestonpans, 2000).
- <sup>58</sup> Peter Davis and Robert Rankine, *Wemyss Ware. A Decorative Scottish Pottery* (Edinburgh, 1986).
- <sup>59</sup> *Pottery Gazette*, 1 Oct. 1883.
- <sup>60</sup> See, *Scotsman*, 26 Jan. 1869.
- <sup>61</sup> *Scotsman*, 24 June 1869.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>63</sup> *Scotsman*, 1 May 1869; 30 Jan. 1869.
- <sup>64</sup> NRS. GD1/970/3: Papers of James Campbell, Schoolmaster at Helmsdale.
- <sup>65</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 20 Aug. 1869.
- <sup>66</sup> The latter, along with Sutherland-owned pieces, was exhibited in 2012 in the London Goldsmiths Company exhibition ‘Gold: Power and Allure.’ On the gold rush see, R. M. Callender and P. F. Reeson (eds), *The Scottish Gold Rush of 1869: British mining no. 84* (Northern Mine Research Society, 2008).
- <sup>67</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 21 Mar. 1814.
- <sup>68</sup> NRS NG1/3/21: Letters of the Board of Trustees, July 1813–Oct. 1818. 1 Feb. 1815.
- <sup>69</sup> Margaret Swain, *The Flowerers: The origins and history of Ayrshire needlework* (Edinburgh, 1855) 8.
- <sup>70</sup> Glasgow, City Archives [GCA]. NRA 15232: Hagart Speirs family of Elderslie and Houston House.
- <sup>71</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 25 Jan. 1893.
- <sup>72</sup> Christine Lodge, ‘Murray, Catherine Countess of Dunmore (1814–1886), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2006) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47198>; accessed 6 Oct. 2015].
- <sup>73</sup> *Inverness Advertiser*, 3 Jun. 1856.

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- <sup>74</sup> *Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 1 Oct. 1892.
- <sup>75</sup> *Scotsman*, 28 Aug. 1889.
- <sup>76</sup> *Scotsman*, 18 Aug. 1906.
- <sup>77</sup> Helland, *British and Irish Home Arts and Industries*.
- <sup>78</sup> *Scotsman*, 14 March 1907.
- <sup>79</sup> *Scotsman*, 30 Jul. 1874. The stand was that of Alexander Dixon Jenkinson, China Merchant of Princess Street in Edinburgh. Like many major retailers, they commissioned fine craft wares from well-known producers, which they sold under their own label.
- <sup>80</sup> *Leicester Chronicle and Leicestershire Mercury*, 27 Nov. 1879.
- <sup>81</sup> *Scotsman*, 3 Jul. 1883.
- <sup>82</sup> *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 17 May 1886.
- <sup>83</sup> *Scotsman*, 20 Aug. 1886.
- <sup>84</sup> ‘A Visit to the Dunmore Pottery. A Contemporary Account with Additional Commentary by Graeme Cruickshank’, *Scottish Pottery Studies* 4 (2002) 81.
- <sup>85</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 26 Jul. 1888.
- <sup>86</sup> *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, 18 Nov. 1881.
- <sup>87</sup> *Scotsman*, 8 Nov. 1919.
- <sup>88</sup> See, *Visit to the Dunmore Pottery*, a ‘romantic framed’ tourist guide.
- <sup>89</sup> See, Murray Pittock and C. A. Whatley, ‘Poems and festivals, art and artifact and the commemoration of Robert Burns, c. 1844–c. 1896’, *SHR* 93 (2014) 56–79.
- <sup>90</sup> *Scotsman*, 22 Oct. 1921.
- <sup>91</sup> E. Mairi MacArthur, *Iona Celtic Art: The work of Alexander and Euphemia Ritchie* (Iona, 2003).
- <sup>92</sup> Frances Balfour, *Lady Victoria Campbell, A memoir* (London, nd. c.1910), 304-5.

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- <sup>93</sup> Pews such as these with their simple, stylised Celtic carvings, are now being replaced with more flexible seating. Personal observation from the old pews recycling workshop at Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh.
- <sup>94</sup> NRS. AF42/277: Records of the Congested Districts Board. Letter to Lord Balfour of Burleigh from the Duchess of Sutherland, with Report. 6 Sept. 1898.
- <sup>95</sup> Denis Stuart, *Dear Duchess: Millicent, duchess of Sutherland, 1867-1955* (London, 1982) gives an overview of her charitable activities.
- <sup>96</sup> *Report on Home Industries*, 73.
- <sup>97</sup> Helland, *British and Irish Home Arts and Industries*.
- <sup>98</sup> See Tindley, *Sutherland Estate*, 129–30, on the characterization of the duchess of Sutherland as ‘Meddlesome Millie’.
- <sup>99</sup> Shetland knitter, personal communication.
- <sup>100</sup> Linda Cluckie, *The Rise and Fall of Art Needlework: Its socio-economic and cultural aspects* (Bury St Edmonds, 2008), 154.
- <sup>101</sup> Nenadic, *Lairds and Luxury*.
- <sup>102</sup> “*We Twa*”: *Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen*, 2 vols (London, 1925), i, 130.
- <sup>103</sup> GCA, NRA 15232: Hagart Speirs family of Elderslie and Houston House. Photograph online [<https://theyokerstory.wordpress.com/2012/05/18/speirs-of-elderslie/>; accessed 6 Oct. 2015].
- <sup>104</sup> *Scotsman*, 10 Mar. 1919.
- <sup>105</sup> Christopher Bailey, ‘Progress and preservation: The role of rural industries in the making of the modern image of the countryside’, *Journal of Design History* 9 (1996) 35-53.
- <sup>106</sup> Rosemary Hannah, *The Grand Designer: The third marquess of Bute* (Edinburgh, 2012).
- <sup>107</sup> Elizabeth Cumming (ed.), *The Art of Modern Tapestry: Dovecot studios since 1912* (Farnham, 2012).

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<sup>108</sup> *Scotsman*, 14 May 1934.

<sup>109</sup> ‘Crotal cloth’ was wool tweed coloured a reddish-brown with dye from lichen grown on local stone. It was used for fashionable country-wear.

<sup>110</sup> *Report on Home Industries*, 136–7.

<sup>111</sup> Comparative statistics collated from published Census schedules.

<sup>112</sup> Joslyn M. Baker, ‘The Moravians. An Alternative Perspective on Whitework Embroidery, 1780-1950,’ unpublished M.A. dissertation (Winchester School of Art, 1995).